

Governor Patrick Joins Legislative Leaders to Celebrate Launch of Green Communities Program

Initiative will help municipalities pursue clean energy projects, make best use of federal stimulus funds for savings

BOSTON- Wednesday, April 22, 2009 - Governor Deval Patrick today joined legislative leaders on Earth Day to announce the launch of the Green Communities Program, which will help municipalities across Massachusetts cut energy bills through greater efficiency and locally generated renewable power.

The Green Communities Program is a component of Governor Patrick's [Massachusetts Recovery Plan](#), making information and technical assistance available for communities to help them prepare for and make the most of federal recovery funds targeted for energy investments.

"Coupled with federal recovery funds for energy efficiency and renewable power, the Green Communities Program will help communities across Massachusetts reduce costs, spur economic activity, and strengthen our collective commitment to a clean energy future," said Governor Patrick.

"Going 'green' is both an economically and environmentally sound path for cities and towns across the Commonwealth. By providing the tools to help cities and towns reach this goal, it is not just individual communities, but the entire Commonwealth that will benefit now and for generations to come," said Senate President Therese Murray. "In addition to improving our communities, this gives an extra boost to the new green collar job sector that is increasingly in demand across the Commonwealth."

"This initiative will help communities on the local level meet their environmental goals," said House Speaker Robert DeLeo. "I am also hopeful this program will provide our cities and towns with more tools as they seek federal recovery funds for energy efficiency programs."

Created by the Green Communities Act - the pioneering energy reform law enacted last year - the Green Communities Program at the Department of Energy Resources (DOER) will support local efforts that further ambitious clean energy goals shared by the Governor and legislative leaders. Envisioned as a way to encourage municipalities to make greener energy decisions, the Green Communities Program is mandated to offer grant and loan opportunities to municipalities in order to be designated as "green communities."

Types of assistance offered by the Green Communities Program will include helping communities qualify for state funding by adopting local by-laws and regulations that facilitate the siting and permitting of renewable energy facilities, benchmarking municipal energy use and reducing energy consumption, purchasing fuel-efficient vehicles for municipal fleets, and taking steps to reduce lifecycle energy costs for new commercial, industrial and residential buildings. The Act allows funding of \$10 million per year from the proceeds of Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative allowance auctions for the program.

Federal funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) includes \$42 million in Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grants to fund efficiency and renewable energy investments by municipalities. The Green Communities Program is now in the process of assigning four regional coordinators who will provide communities around the state with technical assistance on becoming Green Communities and on making choices about energy investments with federal funds.

"The Green Communities Program is poised to fulfill a vision that is shared by Governor Patrick and the Legislature: a one-stop shop for municipalities seeking to make the most of the clean energy opportunities available to them," said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Ian Bowles. "This program will serve as a national model for community mobilization to accelerate the transition to a clean energy future."

"Now open for business, the Green Communities Program stands ready to help cities and towns across the Commonwealth make energy choices that save them money and create a greener energy future for all of us," said DOER Commissioner Philip Giudice. "We look forward to working with communities from Cape Cod to the Berkshires."

Clean energy investments are critical components of Governor Patrick's [Massachusetts Recovery Plan](#), which combines state, federal and, where possible, private efforts to provide immediate and long-term relief and position the Commonwealth for recovery in the following ways:

- **Deliver immediate relief** by investing in the road, bridge and rail projects that put people to work today and providing safety net services that sustain people who are especially vulnerable during an economic crisis;
- **Build a better tomorrow** through education and infrastructure investments that strengthen our economic competitiveness, prepare workers for the jobs of the future and support clean energy, broadband and technology projects that cut costs while growing the economy; and
- **Reform state government** by eliminating the pension and ethics loopholes that discredit the work of government and revitalize the transportation networks that have suffered from decades of neglect and inaction.

For more information about Green Communities Program, visit <http://www.mass.gov/energy/greencommunities>.